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THE CLASSICAL WEEKLY

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PROGRAM OF THE FORTIETH ANNUAL MEETING

VERGIL, OVID, AND CLAUDIAN ON 'LICKING INTO SHAPE' (Levy)

PURITY AND HOLINESS IN THE HIPPOCRATIC OATH (Minar)



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FORTIETH ANNUAL MEETING

of the

CLASSICAL ASSOCIATION OF THE ATLANTIC STATES

Friday, May 9 and Saturday, May 10, 1947

THE HOTEL WILLARD

WASHINGTON, D. C.

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CONVENTION INFORMATION

The Hotel Willard is located at the Northwest corner of Pennsylvania Avenue and Fourteenth Street, NW.

Hotel Reservations. The Hotel Willard is reserving for members and guests of the Association 25

double rooms (twin beds) at \$5.00, \$5.50, \$6.00, \$6.50, \$7.00, \$7.50, \$8.00, \$8.50, \$9.00, \$9.50, \$10.00, \$10.50 or \$11.00, and 25 single rooms at \$4.00, \$4.50, \$5.00, \$5.50, \$6.00, \$6.50 or \$7.00. The average rate for double rooms is \$8.00 and for single rooms \$5.50. Indicate your first, second, and third choice, the time of your arrival and the length of your stay, and the name of your room-mate, if you are reserving a double room. The Hotel will make every effort to reserve a room for you at or near to the rates which you indicate. So that you may be assured of a reservation, *the Hotel requests that your order be in their hands by April 15th, if possible.* Mail your order directly to Mr. Michael A. Derkacz, Executive Manager, Hotel Willard.

Banquet Reservations. Dress will be optional. The price per plate, including gratuity, will be \$3.85. *Make your reservation* with Miss Elizabeth Shields, Central High School, 13th and Clifton Streets, NW., Washington 9, D. C., phone: Warfield 6446, *by April 15th, if possible*, at all events not later than May 5. Since the Hotel requires that the number of persons at the banquet be guaranteed forty-eight hours in advance of the banquet, *please remit your check with your reservation.*

Registration. All persons who attend any of the sessions are asked to register near the entrance to the meeting rooms. Consult the program for the location of these rooms.

Exhibition. An exhibit of texts will be arranged for the convenience of members in the meeting room or nearby.

FRIDAY, MAY 9

1:00 P.M. Luncheon Meeting of the Executive Committee: Parlor E, Main Floor

2:30 P.M., in Cabinet Room, Main Floor

Professor Edward H. Heffner, Editor of THE CLASSICAL WEEKLY, presiding.

Welcome to Washington, Dr. Hobart Munsing Corning, Superintendent of Schools

PAPERS

Vacation Suggestions

Professor Samuel L. Mohler, Franklin and Marshall College

How Shall We Pronounce Ancient Greek?

Professor Lucius R. Shero, Swarthmore College

The 'Free' Citizens in Horace, Odes III. 5. 21

Professor Henry T. Rowell, The Johns Hopkins University

The Role of Language in the New Curriculum

Dr. Bernice V. Wall, Taft Junior High School, Washington

A brief business meeting will follow.

7:30 P.M. Dinner Meeting (Formal dress optional)

Professor Donald B. Durham, President of the Association, presiding

Greetings: Mrs. Marion Wade Doyle, President of the Board of Education, Washington

Representative of the Classical Association of New England

Address: *The Newspaper Can't Get Away from the Classics*

Sir Willmott Lewis, Washington Correspondent of The London Times

SATURDAY, MAY 10

10:00 A.M., in Congressional Room, Main Floor

Panel Discussion: *The Place of Latin in the New Curriculum*

Dr. Edwin Cornell Zavitz, Headmaster, Sidwell Friends' School, presiding

An Administrator Looks at Latin

Mr. Norman J. Nelson, Associate Superintendent of Schools, in charge of Senior High Schools, Washington

Junior High School Latin: For Whom? For How Long? With What Outcome?

Miss Elizabeth White, Bala-Cynwyd (Pennsylvania) Junior High School

An Evaluation of the Latin Program in the Public Senior High Schools

Miss Elizabeth Kellum, Western High School, Baltimore

The Role of Latin in the Private Secondary Schools

Mr. Richard P. Thomsen, Episcopal High School, Alexandria, Va.

How Latin Functions as a Requirement in Parochial Schools

Sister Mary Francis, O. P., Graduate Student, The Catholic University of America

The Value of a Latin Background for the High-School Teacher of English

Miss Ruth M. Stauffer, Head of the Department of English, Divisions 1-9, Public Schools of the District of Columbia

Current Trends in Secondary Education and the Problems That They Pose for the Teacher of Latin

Dean James Harold Fox, School of Education, George Washington University

12:30 P.M. Luncheon Meeting of the Executive Committee, Parlor E, Main Floor

2:00 P.M., in Congressional Room, Main Floor

Annual Business Meeting of the Association

2:15 P.M.

PAPERS

Miss Helen S. MacDonald, Friends' Select School, Philadelphia, Vice-President of the Association, presiding

A Necklace for Eileithyia

Professor Lillian B. Lawler, Hunter College

The Classics Department in the Liberal Arts College To-day

Professor Whitney J. Oates, Princeton, University

The Classics and the Educationists

Professor Frank M. Snowden, Jr., Howard University

Latin and the Less Accelerated Student

Mrs. Harold W. Murray, Calvin Coolidge High School, Washington

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1946-1947

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VERGIL, OVID, AND CLAUDIAN ON 'LICKING INTO SHAPE'

mulecere alternos et corpora fingere lingua,
Verg. *Aen.* 8.634
fingit lingua corpora bina sua, Ovid, *Fasti* 2.418
linguisque trisulcis
molli lambentes fixerunt membra cerastae,
Claudian, *In Ruf.* 1.95-96

In the passage from which the first quotation is taken, Vergil describes the tender care given Romulus and Remus by their foster-mother, the wolf; not only did she provide them nourishment, but molded their bodies with gentle strokes of her tongue. The latter touch is closely imitated by Ovid in the second quotation.¹ Claudian, in ghastly parody, portrays the much-reviled Rufinus as owing his bodily conformation to the snakes which served as hair to the Fury Megaera, in whose bosom he was cradled as a new-born babe.

The three poets transfer to human infants—albeit under extra-human circumstances—a concept arising from a bit of folk-lore dealing with the animal kingdom.² The belief that bear-cubs are born a shapeless mass, and are formed by strokes of their mother's tongue, has been called 'eine der allerverbreitetsten naturgeschichtlichen Mythen des classischen Alterthums'.³ A striking indication of its wide acceptance is the fact that Vergil and his imitators could leave the comparison implicit; were it not for the presumption that his readers were familiar with the folkloristic notion, Vergil would scarcely have presented in so off-hand a manner the startling idea of babes being 'licked into shape' by a maternal tongue.

That Vergil himself was very fond of this bear story we learn from an anecdote recorded by Aulus Gellius:

Amici . . . familiaresque P. Vergilii . . . dicere eum solitum ferunt parere se versus more atque ritu ursino. Namque ut illa bestia fetum ederet ineffigiatum informemque, lambendoque id postea . . . conformaret et fingeret, proinde ingenii quoque sui partus recentes rudi esse facie et imperfecta, sed deinceps tractando colendoque reddere iis se oris et voltus lineamenta.⁴

The folk-tale was given its first extant literary

form by Ovid in the *Metamorphoses* (15.379-381):

nec catulus, partu quem reddidit ursa recenti
sed male viva caro est; lambendo mater in artus
fingit et in formam, quantam capit ipsa, reducit.

A selection of citations will illustrate the persistence of the quaint belief. Aristotle says nothing about the formative process, but that he was not uninfluenced by the popular notion may be inferred from his words on new-born bears:

<ἡ ἄρκτος> τίκτει . . . ψιλὸν καὶ τυφλόν, καὶ σχεδὸν ἀδιάθροτα τὰ σκέλη καὶ τὰ πλείστα τῶν μορίων.⁵

In Pliny the idea is found in its full form:

<ursae> pariunt . . . plurimum quinos. Hi sunt candida informisque caro, paulo muribus maior, sine oculis, sine pilo; ungues tantum prominent. Hanc lambendo paulatim figurant.⁶

From Pliny's time onward the tale was oft repeated. In the second century of our era we find it in the works of Aelian,⁷ Oppian,⁸ Galen,⁹ and Pollux.¹⁰ Still later, Servius mentions the notion somewhat inappositely in his commentary on Vergil, *Georgics* 3.247, *informes ursi*.

In the sixth century, Luxorius devotes to the idea an entire little poem, entitled *De Partu Ursae*:¹¹

Lambere nascentis fertur primordia prolis
ursa ferox, placido eum facit ore genus.
Expolit informes labris parientibus artus
et pietas subolem rursus amore creat.
Attrito truncum formatur corpore pignus
ut sculpendo facit crescere membra faber.
Officium natura suum permisit amanti:
formam post uterum lingua magistra parit.

In the next century, Isidore of Seville supplements the biological fantasy with an etymology as ill-founded in fact:

Ursus fertur dictus, quod ore suo formet fetus, quasi orsus. Nam aiunt eos informes generare partus, et carnem quandam nasci, quam mater lambendo in membra componit.¹²

The entire item, etymology and all, is copied some two centuries later by Hrabanus Maurus.¹³ The great thirteenth-century encyclopedist Vincent of Beauvais, in his *Speculum Naturale* (20.118), gives almost verbatim the passages which we have quoted from Pliny and Isidore.

The notion which we have been discussing has left its impress on modern letters. Shakespeare has the hump-backed Richard compare himself to

an unlicked bear-whelp
That carries no impression like the dam.¹⁴

So Pope, in the pseudo-erudite Dunciad:

... watchful Bruin forms, with plastic care,
Each growing lump, and brings it to a bear.¹⁵

Bachofen¹⁶ holds that the eighteenth century still regarded the old tale with some seriousness; he says that the exhibition in a museum at Bologna of an 'ursulus a caeso matris utero extractus et omnibus suis partibus formatus' was regarded in the century preceding his own as affording a notable contribution to natural history.¹⁷

In England, Sir Thomas Browne had previously appealed to reason, theology, and scientific observation in the hope of extirpating an opinion which, he says, 'is . . . not only vulgar, and common with us at present, but hath been of old delivered by ancient Writers.'¹⁸ The dawn of our modern scientific study of animal life naturally consigned the belief to the realms of fancy.

We may conclude with a remark of a near-contemporary: 'Though the belief in the idea has died away, the remembrance of the superstition still survives in the notion of licking youngsters into shape at school . . .'¹⁹ and, we may add, in that of 'licking into shape' a work of literature or scholarship, *more atque ritu Vergiliano*.

NOTES

¹ See J. G. Frazer, *The Fasti of Ovid* (London, The Macmillan Co., 1929), ad loc.

² See Conington on Verg. *Aen.* 8.634 (4th ed., London, Bell, 1881).

³ O. Keller, *Thiere des Classischen Alterthums* (Innsbruck, Wagner, 1887), 122-123, and n. 199. Cf. also O. Keller, *Die Antike Tierwelt* (Leipzig, Engelmann, 1909), 1.180; J. J. Bachofen, *Der Baer in den Religionen des Alterthums* (Basel, Meyr, 1863), 4-5; article **Baer**, Pauly-Wissowa RE 4.2749.57-66; F. E. Hulme, *Natural History, Lore and Legend* (London, Quaritch, 1895), 161-162; H. N. Wethered, *The Mind of the Ancient World* (London, Longmans, Green & Co., 1937), 9.

⁴ *Noct. Att.* 17.10. The same anecdote is recorded in a slightly different form in Suetonius (or Donatus), *Vita Vergili* 22 (= Reifferscheid p. 59).

⁵ *Hist. Animal.* 6.30. 'Aristotle seems to countenance' the superstition, says Sir Thomas Browne, loc. cit. n. 17, below.

⁶ *Nat. Hist.* 8.126.

⁷ *De Natura Animalium* 2.19.

⁸ *Cynegetica* 3.159-169.

⁹ *Ad Pisonem de Theriaca* 11, ad fin.

¹⁰ *Onomasticon* 5.80.

¹¹ *Anth. Lat.* 342 M, 331 R.

¹² *Origines* 12.2.22.

¹³ *De Universo* 8.1 (= Migne Lat. 111.223A)

¹⁴ *King Henry VI, Part III*, 3.2.161-162.

¹⁵ I.99-100; cf. Robert Burton, *The Anatomy of Melancholy, Democritus to the Reader* (=ed. of Shilleto, 1.30), and the citations from Dryden and Butler in Hulme, loc. cit. n. 3, above.

¹⁶ loc. cit. n. 3, above.

¹⁷ Cf. Sir Thomas Browne, *Pseudodoxia Epidemica* 3.6.

¹⁸ loc. cit., preceding note.

¹⁹ Hulme, loc. cit. n. 3, above.

HARRY L. LEVY

HUNTER COLLEGE OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK

PURITY AND HOLINESS IN THE HIPPOCRATIC OATH

Professor Ludwig Edelstein in his recent edition of the Hippocratic *Oath*¹ has for the first time shown how to make consistent sense of the document as a whole and of several particular passages, by demonstrating that the document is a product of the Pythagorean school. Thus when the one taking the oath says, 'I will not use the knife, not even on sufferers from stone, but will withdraw in favor of such men as are engaged in this work,' this reflects the Pythagorean wish to avoid the defilement of blood. This sentence, with the preceding paragraphs, reads as follows:

οὐ δώσω δὲ οὐδὲ φάρμακον οὐδὲν αἰτηθεὶς θανάσιμον
οὐδὲ ὑφ' ἡγήσομαι ξυμβουλίην τοιῦνδε. ὁμοίως δὲ οὐδὲ
γυναικὶ πεσσὸν φθόριον δώσω. ἀγνῶς δὲ καὶ ὁσίως
διατηρήσω βίον ἐμὸν καὶ τέχνην ἐμήν.

οὐ τεμέω δὲ οὐδὲ μὴν λιθιῶντας, ἐκχωρήσω δὲ
ἐργάτησιν ἀνδράσιν πρὸς τῇσδε.

I would suggest that the sentence beginning ἀγνῶς δὲ ('In purity and holiness I will guard my life and my art') may originally have come after the next sentence, on surgery. The sentence, as it stands, does not have much point or relevance. The prohibition of giving aid to

suicides and of abortion is not very surprising even from the ancient point of view. Although, as Edelstein shows, physicians did commonly engage in both practices, there were differences of opinion. With the interdiction of surgery the situation is quite different. It seems certain that at the time of the *Oath* (fifth or fourth century B.C.) physicians regularly performed many operations, and when the Pythagorean renounces the practice, it is natural for him to emphasize the reason. This reason is precisely that given in our sentence, the desire to preserve purity and holiness of life. It is well known that the Pythagoreans did not allow the sacrifice of living beings, and they esteemed surgery lower than any other branch of medicine. However, they did not forbid it to all—only to the specially consecrated members of their group. The *Oath* here, then, carefully sets these apart from the ordinary physician. It is 'my life and my art' which are to be guarded.

What could have led to the transposition of the sentence? It was not long before the *Oath* was taken over by the medical profession in

general. It was subsumed into the Hippocratic corpus, and during the succeeding centuries suffered various textual changes (including presumably the substitution of various Ionic forms). Its Pythagorean origin was forgotten. Various views have been held in later times of the meaning of the surgery-clause, including the belief that it referred to the developing cleft between physicians and surgeons, when surgery came to be thought of as beneath the dignity of the physician. In this context the promise of purity and holiness would have no meaning, and it may easily have been transferred to the preceding paragraph.

This correction, of course, falls far short of being 'necessary,' but is transmitted as possibly suggestive.

NOTE

¹ *The Hippocratic Oath: Text, Translation, and Interpretation*; Supplements to the Bulletin of the History of Medicine, No. 1 (Baltimore, The Johns Hopkins Press, 1943).

EDWIN L. MINAR, JR.

CONNECTICUT COLLEGE

AMERICAN ACADEMY IN ROME SCHOOL OF CLASSICAL STUDIES SUMMER SESSION, JULY-AUGUST, 1947

The Academy takes pleasure in announcing the resumption of the Summer Sessions of the School of Classical Studies under the direction of Professor Henry T. Rowell. A comprehensive course in Roman civilization from the earliest times to the reign of Constantine will be given, based on the study at first hand of existing monuments in and about Rome. The course will begin during the first ten days of July and extend for six weeks. Precise dates will be established later to correspond with shipping schedules.

Accommodations and board will be furnished in Academy buildings at a nominal charge. Arrangements have been made for transportation to Horace's Sabine farm, Tivoli, Ostia and other points of historical and archaeological interest in Latium. Museums are now functioning on regular schedules, and the many new archaeological discoveries made during the war years are open to inspection and will be included in the course. These circumstances and arrangements will make the 1947 Session particularly complete and profitable.

Total basic expenses including tuition, accommodations, board and transportation to and from Italy may be estimated at \$725.00. A limited amount of scholarship assistance is available and application should be made to the New York office before April 25th. Requests for details should be addressed to:

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